

William Tyler, Quindar, Nick Hallett

Four musicians perform original music to a selection of lost 1960s counterculture films



NORTH ADAMS, MASSACHUSETTS — **Mikael Jorgensen** of Wilco teams up with art historian and curator **James Merle Thomas** (his partner in **Quindar**), performer and composer **Nick Hallett**, and guitarist **William Tyler** for a new project that blends Quindar's intergalactic sonic waves with folk fingerpicking and Fred Engelberg film. Workshopped at MASS MoCA, the piece will debut at the Ecstatic Music Festival in New York City, then return to North Adams for a weekend performance on **Saturday, March 19, at 8pm.**

Jorgensen, Thomas, Hallett, and Tyler connect technical and music elements with selections from the Fred Engelberg film archive from the University of Southern California. Blending Tyler's folk fingerpicking guitar stylings with Quindar's electronic elements and Hallett's eclectic compositions, the group scores and performs a series of new compositions to accompany "The Lost Films of Fred Engelberg (1929-2012)." A Los Angeles-based filmmaker, musician, poet, and playwright, Engelberg's folk records, experimental films, and feature-length documentaries feature Los Angeles visual artists, 1960s counterculture, religious cults, and fringe activist groups — all reflecting the political and cultural complexities of the postwar American experience. Engelberg avoided the commercial realm of filmmaking and fell into relative obscurity; his many unreleased short and documentary films are now being restored and seen for the first time in nearly 40 years.

Mikael Jorgensen is a Grammy-award winning pianist, keyboardist, electronic musician, and producer. At SOMA Studios in Chicago, he engineered records for artists such as Stereolab, Rob Mazurek, The Aluminum Group, and Wilco. While engineering Wilco's *A Ghost Is Born* in 2002, he began playing keyboards in the group, where he has remained for over a decade. Jorgensen has most recently released *The Cheetah* on Butterscotch Records with Chris Girard and long-term musical partner Greg O'Keeffe. In 2015, Jorgensen was in residency at MASS MoCA with Helado Negro's *Island Universe Story*.

In Quindar, he performs with **James Merle Thomas**, an art history professor at the University of Southern California who researches the connections between postwar American avant-garde art and NASA. Thomas curated an exhibition at Stanford University in conjunction with the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation and has served as the Assistant Curator of the Second Biennial of Contemporary Art of Seville (2005) and the Seventh Gwangju Biennale (2008). "Part theory, part band," Quindar combines rigorous historical research with musical performance. The duo selects archival materials (audio, film,

design) and folds them into ambient, electronic, and experimental music. The project is named after Quindar tones, the ubiquitous transmission beeps heard during early manned spaceflight missions.

Nick Hallett is a composer, vocalist, and cultural producer whose work has been presented at the Whitney Museum of American Art, MoMA, the New Museum of Contemporary Art, The Kitchen, and Joe's Pub, among others. In addition to his work on the Engelberg project, Hallett currently collaborates with choreographer Bill T. Jones as composer of the Bill T. Jones/ Arnie Zane Company's three-part dance-theater work, *Analogy: A Trilogy*. In April 2010, Hallett premiered his first original opera *Whispering Pines*, co-authored with artist Shana Moulton, at The Kitchen in New York City, and it has since been staged at the New Museum of Contemporary Art, SFMOMA, Carolina Performing Arts, and other venues.

Nashville-native **William Tyler** is a masterful lo-fi guitar player who first came on the music scene when he joined the band Lambchop at the age of 19. Since then, he has played with the Silver Jews, Bonnie "Prince" Billy, Charlie Louvin, and Candi Staton. Known for both his acoustic and electric solo guitar playing, Tyler blends meditative guitar music pioneered by John Fahey and Jack Rose, with Nashville country, English folk stylings, and Southern California pop-folk-rock of the '70s. In 2010, Tyler released his first album under his own name, *Behold the Spirit*, which was lauded by *Pitchfork* as "the most vital, energized album by an American solo guitarist in a decade or more." Tyler made his North Adams debut at Solid Sound in 2015, when he charmed the crowd with his quick fingers and cheerful banter.

Nick Hallett, Quindar, and William Tyler dive into the historic Engelberg film archives on **Saturday, March 19, at 8pm** in MASS MoCA's Hunter Center. Dinner is available from Lickety Split before and during the show. A full bar serves Berkshire Brewing Company beers and Berkshire Mountain Distillery spirits. Tickets are \$8 students, \$12 in advance, \$18 day of, and \$22 preferred. Tickets for all events are available through the MASS MoCA box office located on Marshall Street in North Adams, open 11am to 5pm every day except Tuesdays through spring 2016. Tickets can also be charged by phone by calling 413.662.2111 during box office hours or purchased online at massmoca.org. All events are held rain or shine.

Images

High-resolution images of MASS MoCA's winter/spring 2016 events are available through this link: bit.ly/1NL6mgv

About MASS MoCA

MASS MoCA is one of the world's liveliest (and largest) centers for making and enjoying today's most important art, music, dance, theater, film, and video. Hundreds of works of visual and performing art have been created on its 19th-century factory campus during fabrication and rehearsal residencies, making MASS MoCA among the most productive sites in the country for the creation and presentation of new art. More platform than box, MASS MoCA strives to bring to its audiences art experiences that are fresh, engaging, and transformative.

MASS MoCA's galleries are open 11am to 5pm every day except Tuesdays. The Hall Art Foundation's Anselm Kiefer exhibition is seasonal and reopens April 30, 2016. Gallery admission is \$18 for adults, \$16 for veterans and seniors, \$12 for students, \$8 for children 6 to 16, and free for children 5 and under. Members are admitted free year-round. For additional information, call 413.662.2111 x1 or visit massmoca.org.